

**King County Agriculture Commission
Minutes from February 8, 2007
Issaquah Fish Hatchery
Issaquah**

Commissioners Present: Nancy Hutto, George Irwin, Grant Davidson, Roger Calhoon, Julie Haakenson, Bob Tidball, Larry Pickering, Judy Taylor, Robert Holland, Ben Kodama, Lu Eng, Bob Vos

Commissioners Absent: Michael Blakely, Ewing Stringfellow

Agency Staff: Steve Evans, Judy Herring,

Guest Agency Staff: Josh Monaghan, King Conservation District; Todd Murray, Washington State University Extension; David Spohr, Rural Ombudsperson, King County Council; Jill Moe, WLRD; Mike Dykeman, Director of Building Services, Harry Reinert, DDES

Guests: US Farm Services Agency; Anne Mack, Marguerite Sutherland, PLAN; Charles Baillargeon, citizen; Jeff McMorris, Councilmember Kathy Lambert's Office

The Meeting was called to order by Nancy Hutto, Chair.

Roundtable: Ben just visited a commercial greenhouse – there are only three left in King County. Because of the bad weather before Christmas, if they don't have a good Valentines Day, some may not make it. George is involved in Annual Hereford Sale in Chehalis, got the steers tagged, and is involved in 4-H and FFA. He needs fall lambs – 90 lb.; and hogs for 4-H if anyone knows of any. Biodiesel is driving corn prices through the roof and hay is as high as it can be. It is a challenge to get feed for the next 60 days until the grass comes on. Bob T. Many years ago he went from Oregon to Canada looking for dry land and chose the Green River Valley. He was very concerned about standing water and flooding from all the building in the valley and then from the impacts of widening 277th. In spite of the extraordinary flood, he had no standing water: “they” took care of it! Nancy is across from the South Fork Snoqualmie, had water in her shed, lost a computer, had to spend a lot of time cleaning up. Rob organized a meeting with landowners facing flooding in the Lower Green. He thinks they no longer think there is a conspiracy to flood them out. Lu said her family is doing dry flowers now, waiting for fresh flowers to come out; recovering from floods. Judy got flooding in November – extreme for them, knocking out their furnace, but not as bad as in the Snoqualmie. Shearing sheep now. Larry is doing more with horses now, but looking forward to horticulture. Julie: Pike Place raised \$25,000 and bough bulbs for the Hmong. Parents will be back in their house in the Snoqualmie this week, having recovered from the flood.

Decisions Made:

Motion: George Irwin moved and Bob Tidball seconded that the Commission write a letter in support of re-directing Conservation Futures Funding that had been appropriated for purchasing development rights in the Lower Green APD, to the Enumclaw, Snoqualmie and Sammamish APDs. The motion also stated that the Commission supported a request by FPP staff to use part of the compensation from the 2005 condemnation of the Muth/Polygon property to purchase farmland development rights in the Enumclaw APD. Motion passed.

Recommendations:

Accept the proposed priorities for the '07 work plan and send them to the Executive and Council.

Have a Commission discussion on the FPP program issues that have arisen in the Regulatory Committee discussions on proposed revisions to the Deeds and Covenants:

- (i) What is the nature of farmland? Are we interested in profitability from small operations on part of a site or having farming on the entire site or keeping land available for ag in the future?
- (ii) What can be done if a landowner won't accept the price offered for the purchase of development rights but a swap might be made with other lands?
- (iii) What can be done when a person who wants to put his land into the FPP but it has no house and therefore all he has to sell is a residential site? Yet if he sells it, he can't put up a house.
- (iv) How do we get A-10 parcels into the FPP program?

Add issues to the handout provided by the Regulatory Committee.

The Commissioners should pay attention to the bills in Olympia regarding water rights, especially the one related to relinquishment of water rights. Note that you need 15 years to show you used water; often need records from before when you were born. Check the issues related to bills on the web sites of the Farm Bureau or the Cattlemen's Association.

Conduct a windshield survey of agriculture in the whole County to accompany that done in the Agricultural Production Districts and Vashon.

To lower the cost of permits for agricultural buildings: establish a "registered plans program" to expedite review of pole buildings; qualify or certify engineers who provide the required structural review.

Consider a strategy to work with Congressional delegation to include the loss/recovery needs of our produce farmers in the Disaster Bill or the Farm Bill.

Hmong Relief: insure that bulbs or tubers are distributed equally among the farmers. Call the Puyallup Fair to determine if they have bulbs.

Presentations.

Jill Moe provided an overview of the process and schedule for the Shoreline Master Plan Update. No proposals have been made. However, the work of the Commission through the Critical Areas Ordinance is respected and the County will probably propose that as status quo. The County has to propose criteria for new agriculture within shoreline areas, and the Commission will be included in that process.

Mike Dykeman of DDES described the ways in which DDES is improving services for agricultural and rural landowners:

- They conduct a "triage session" everyday from 8:30 – 10:30 AM in the DDES lobby, free. Applicants are welcome to come with their situations/questions.
- A Rural Permit Coordinator was funded for the '07 budget.
- They have formed an inter-agency Agricultural Permit Team that has been meeting since October. The team includes staff or managers from all parts of the DDES permit process, the King Conservation District, the Health Department, and the WLRD Ag Team. The purpose of the team will be to further improve agricultural permit review.
- Two workshops will be held for landowners on how to get a "simple ag building" permit – as requested by the Commission and the KCD.
- The Ag Permit Team will be used to address regulatory and permit issues that are unique to agriculture.

(Commissioners were encouraged by this news.)

The Farm Service Agency announced that funds for disaster loans should be passed in a few days. They are making site visits now; and are still taking requests for visits.

Agency Presentations:

Todd Murray, WSU Extension:

- Site visit by the Kellogg Foundation on the Food and Fitness Initiative went very well. We will know who receives the grants in Mid-March. WSU appreciates the Commission support.
- Bee Cha was able to arrange more tractor repair workshops for the Hmong.
- WSU faculty, Dick Dougherty will visit with growers on food safety and flooding - the FDA Advisory – on March 25th.

Josh Monaghan, KCD:

- Matt Livingood was re-elected to the KCD Board of Supervisors.
- Last day for ordering plants from the KCD bare root sale is tomorrow.
- Livestock BMP classes are beginning in Preston.

Nancy Hutto adjourned the meeting.